

MRIP Transition Team: Atlantic and Gulf Subgroup

FINAL Summary

January 23, 2015

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Proposed Agenda

1. Approval of Meeting Summaries (Dave)
2. Recap of last week's meeting (Galen)
3. What should our report look like? (Galen)
4. Can we schedule milestones? (Dave)
5. Continue discussion of pros and cons of short-term vs. long-term plan for FES/CHTS benchmarking and calibration. (We need to hear and address everybody's concerns.)
 - a. Stewardship benefits of short-term vs. long-term approaches?
 - b. How easy will it be to change time frame for benchmarking and calibration?
 - i. Short-term: Push out to longer time frame?
 - ii. Long-term: Move up to shorter time frame?
 - c. Likelihood of being pushed to calibrate after one year of benchmarking for key stocks?
 - i. Red snapper
 - ii. Black sea bass
 - iii. Striped bass
 - d. How would outreach messages differ for short-term vs. long-term plans? How do we sell either plan to stakeholders? Is one easier to sell than the other?
6. What should the schedule be for incorporation of revised catch statistics into assessments? Will this be independent of benchmarking/calibration time frame?
7. What should the schedule be for incorporation of revised catch statistics and revised assessments into management actions? Will this be independent of benchmarking/calibration time frame?

At the beginning of the meeting Dave Van Voorhees gave an overview of the importance of meeting summaries and thanked everyone for contributing edits and encouraged the team to continue doing so. The scheduling of summaries will be as follows: 1) a draft summary of the previous week's meeting will be sent out to team members by the next meeting (one week following), 2) the team will be able to provide comments to the draft until the following Wednesday, and 3) a final summary will be distributed two weeks after the meeting.

Galen Tromble provided a summary of the previous week's meeting and provided his thoughts on where the group stands and how the Team's discussions and thoughts on moving forward could be presented to NOAA Fisheries leadership. Tromble proposed that the Team's report thoroughly and clearly capture the pros and cons of potential benchmarking time frames and timelines for each method, while not choosing a particular approach, but laying out all of the associated issues and concerns to each approach to inform later decisions by NOAA Fisheries leadership. The opinion is that the Team cannot make a decision now, as when the process moves forward many facts beyond control may affect events. He ended with a final thought that when comparing the two benchmarking time frames, it may be better to be *prepared* to potentially calibrate the data after one year based on checkpoints and review, than to have no plans and be forced by external events to move forward unprepared. With either option, there will be at least two years of side-by-side benchmarking.

The Team members on the call provided feedback on Tromble's report proposal, with several members in favor of the idea, but preferring to give a definitive recommendation on which approach is preferred by the majority; while others approved of presenting both ideas in the report without making a choice.

In general, the group was comfortable with the idea of 'being prepared' to calibrate and incorporate new estimates into stock assessments after one year in case of external forces requiring this, but most preferred to wait until at least two years if possible. It was pointed out that since MRIP's inception, decisions and ideals have been set to the overarching idea to "take time and do it right" and involve all necessary parties. MRIP has been criticized for this, but so far the products have been well justified; therefore, the inclination is to stay with this ideal. It was also noted that a faster time line may be more beneficial in terms of stocks as there is a significant bias in the current effort estimates being used (Coastal Household Telephone Survey) and that this bias may potentially increase in the upcoming benchmark years. The sooner new estimates could be incorporated into stock assessments, the sooner this bias can be accounted for.

Van Voorhees clarified that NOAA Fisheries leadership will be making the final decision on how to transition to the new survey methodology, but that all of the Transition Team's viewpoints will be presented and considered to guide the best approach.

Because of the concerns raised about the relative ease (or not) of incorporating new estimates into the stock assessment models (update versus benchmark assessment), it was suggested that, if possible, simulations could be run in 2015 to determine the potential extent of stock assessment and management effects. It was noted that there could be regional differences in how the models perform, where pure recreational fisheries may just be a case of rescaling population size, while fisheries with both recreational and commercial components will be more challenging to interpret model performance. In addition, if the calibration we develop decreases in magnitude as you go further back in time, it may cause more complications than if it were constant across years. In terms of modeling different scenarios in 2015 (decreasing calibration versus constant), the benefit will be to potentially determine how much distortion in selectivity patterns, how it affects estimates, recruitment, MSY, etc. However, it was pointed out by another member of the Team that running simulations will require resources that are likely to be in short supply. The group agreed that part of the advice the group provides will be that all regularly scheduled assessments may have to be postponed and resources diverted for key stocks if we decide to move forward with a calibration after one year,. Essentially, it may not be possible to run simulations and accelerate assessment updates for key stocks in the same year.

Lastly, the group discussed if we would likely get more external pressure to accelerate benchmarking and calibration for certain key stocks. The group suggested that there are likely to be regional differences in how stakeholders might push for new estimates. It cannot be easily determined which is more likely: 1) pressure to incorporate sooner than later or 2) accepting that taking longer to ensure a more stable calibration. This is mostly because current perceptions are that effort estimates are already 'too high.' Although different in scope, it was noted that the group could use the example of the current APAIS calibration as an example of using data after one year versus longer – based on how the current efforts play out and if it was consistent between years one and two. Overall, it was decided that this conversation will need to happen at the General Council/Regulatory Programs level, but that from the group's perspective a decision should be made based on scientific justification not outside pressures. Additionally, a clear communications strategy is necessary and should be incorporated into the Transition Plan.

Next Steps:

1. Stock assessment members should think about Agenda Item 6: *What should the schedule be for incorporation of revised catch statistics into assessments? Will this be independent of benchmarking/calibration time frame?*
2. Management members should think about Agenda Item 7: *What should the schedule be for incorporation of revised catch statistics and revised assessments into management actions? Will this be independent of benchmarking/calibration time frame?*
3. Members should send additional state/Commission managed species to Galen for incorporation into the key stocks list. Additionally, a ranking within each region should be presented.

List of Key Stocks

Jurisdiction	Center	FMP	Status Stock	Ranking (1-3) (1 = highest priority)	Percent Recreational
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gag - Gulf of Mexico		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Greater amberjack - Gulf of Mexico		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Red snapper - Gulf of Mexico		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gray triggerfish - Gulf of Mexico		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Red grouper - Gulf of Mexico		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Cubera snapper - Gulf of Mexico		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gray snapper - Gulf of Mexico		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gulf of Mexico Deep Water Grouper Complex		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gulf of Mexico Mid-Water Snapper Complex		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gulf of Mexico Shallow Water Grouper Complex		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of	Lane snapper - Gulf of Mexico		

		the Gulf of Mexico			
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Snowy grouper - Gulf of Mexico		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Vermilion snapper - Gulf of Mexico		
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Yellowedge grouper - Gulf of Mexico		
HMS	SEFSC	Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species	Atlantic sharpnose shark - Atlantic		
HMS	SEFSC	Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species	Sailfish - Western Atlantic		
HMS	SEFSC	Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species	Shortfin mako - North Atlantic		
HMS	SEFSC	Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species	Yellowfin tuna - Atlantic		
HMS	SEFSC	Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species	Bluefin tuna - Western Atlantic		
MAFMC	NEFSC	Atlantic Mackerel, Squid and Butterfish	Atlantic mackerel - Gulf of Maine / Cape Hatteras		
MAFMC	NEFSC	Bluefish	Bluefish - Atlantic Coast		

MAFMC	NEFSC	Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass	Black sea bass - Mid-Atlantic Coast		
MAFMC	NEFSC	Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass	Scup - Atlantic Coast		
MAFMC	NEFSC	Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass	Summer flounder - Mid-Atlantic Coast		
NEFMC	NEFSC	Northeast Multispecies	Atlantic cod - Gulf of Maine		
NEFMC	NEFSC	Northeast Multispecies	Haddock - Gulf of Maine		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery of the Atlantic	Dolphinfish - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery of the Atlantic	Wahoo - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Black sea bass - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Gag - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Red snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic	Snowy grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast		

		Region			
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Atlantic spadefish - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Bar jack - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Blue runner - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Blueline tilefish - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Gray snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Gray triggerfish - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Greater amberjack - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Hogfish - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic	Lane snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast		

		Region			
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Nassau grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast / Gulf of Mexico		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Red grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Red porgy - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Scamp - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	South Atlantic Deepwater Complex		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	South Atlantic Grunts Complex		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	South Atlantic Jacks Complex		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	South Atlantic Porgy Complex		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic	South Atlantic Shallow Water Snapper-Grouper Complex		

		Region			
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	South Atlantic Snappers Complex		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Speckled hind - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Tilefish - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Vermilion snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Warsaw grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	White grunt - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Wreckfish - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Yellowedge grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of	King mackerel - Gulf of Mexico		

		the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic			
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic	King mackerel - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic	Spanish mackerel - Gulf of Mexico		
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic	Spanish mackerel - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic	Cobia - Southern Atlantic Coast		
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region / Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Black grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast / Gulf of Mexico		
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region / Reef Fish	Goliath grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast / Gulf of Mexico		

		Resources of the Gulf of Mexico			
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region / Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Mutton snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast / Gulf of Mexico		
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region / Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Yellowtail snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast / Gulf of Mexico		
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic	Cobia - Gulf of Mexico		